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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUBLIN 000778

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [IZ](#) [EI](#)
SUBJECT: IRAQI PARLIAMENTARIANS MAKE THEIR CASE IN IRELAND

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Classified By: DCM Jonathan Benton for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary and Comment

11. (U) In a June 18-24 trip sponsored by the International Republican Institute (IRI) and organized with embassy assistance, a group of Iraqi parliamentarians visited Ireland to learn from the Irish experience of reconciliation and to plead for more Irish assistance. During this visit the group met with Northern Ireland's main political parties, and visited its fledgling Assembly. In the Republic, the Irish government rolled out the red carpet. The group provided testimony at an open session of the Irish parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs and met with the Taoiseach (the Irish Prime Minister) and Department of Foreign Affairs officials. The Ambassador hosted a coffee bringing the group together with leading journalists and members of the local Iraqi community. Their last day in Ireland was spent at the Glencree Center for Peace and Reconciliation, an NGO engaged in peace building in Ireland as well as in Haiti, the Middle East and Sri Lanka. At Glencree, the group participated in reconciliation exercises and heard Glencree's description of the steps necessary to build peace, including the necessity of bringing in people on the extreme edges and victims. The Iraqis were fascinated and encouraged by what they learned, asking Glencree if it would consider running workshops in Iraq. IRI also suggested that it would like to build links with Glencree.

12. (C) Comment: From our parochial perspective, this visit was a smashing success. The delegation eloquently made its case to doubters in the Irish parliament, while galvanizing the GOI to become a more active proponent within the EU of assistance to Iraq. Their visit was one of the top stories in the evening news, with 3-4 on-air minutes. The Irish Times also ran a story. As for their own goals, the delegation was especially satisfied with its Glencree training day. All sides recognize that the Irish and Iraqi experiences are not parallel; still, the Iraqis were intrigued by what Glencree said, they participated actively, and they seemed to gain hope. There is no better way to persuade Europeans to support Iraq than to let them hear directly from Iraqis courageously engaged in building their country. Given the impact the group had here, we would hope that future visits might be expanded to include stops in other European capitals.

Press opportunity

13. (U) To raise the profile of the group's visit, the Ambassador invited them to a roundtable conversation with members of the press and the local Iraqi community. At this

event, former Iraqi Foreign Minister Adnan Pachachi outlined for the audience a generally positive assessment of the situation in Iraq, highlighting the successful elections, legislative progress, and statements by the new Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki calling for the disarming of insurgents. He also provided a fair assessment of the growth of corruption and the continued struggles to establish adequate Iraqi security forces. According to Pachachi, violence will not subside until the Iraqis have confidence in their own security forces. In terms of Iraqi determination to pursue democracy, he added that no Iraqi wants to return to leadership dominated by one leader or one group and that the current situation is "hard, difficult and hopeless, but we must persevere, there is no other option."

14. (U) Mr. Redha Jawad Taki, spokesman for the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SCIRI) told the audience that the USG-led invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq was legitimate under UN Security Council mandates. He also noted that many of the problems currently faced in Iraq stem from the desires of individuals, groups, and nations who seek to use Iraq to address grievances against the U.S. or the West, and the toll for this global conflict is paid for in innocent Iraqi blood. He echoed Pachachi's call for coalition forces to stay in Iraq until Iraqi forces could provide adequate security for their citizens.

Irish Parliament

15. (C) Those opposed to U.S. engagement in Iraq dominated the session in parliament, although the chairman of the committee and others sought to steer the conversation in a more positive direction and to encourage the Iraqis. Those opposed to U.S. engagement cited ongoing violence in Iraq, the difficulty Western reporters are having getting out of the Green Zone to report what is "really" happening, and the

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desire of outside countries to reap the benefits of Iraqi oil. Some, in a veiled reference to the U.S., alluded to their empathy with Iraqis who have to put up with a powerful outsider just as the Irish had to suffer under the British for 800 years. Former FM Pachachi was especially effective. Rather than tangle with the parliamentarians, with dignity and authority, he gave an honest picture of the situation in Iraq, making the same points as at the ambassador's roundtable. The effect was to help the committee see Iraq not as a desperate place mucked up by the Americans, but rather, as a country struggling to come to its feet, with U.S. assistance, and succeed as a democracy. Following the formal session, the committee hosted a reception for the delegation.

Irish Prime Minister and Department of Foreign Affairs

16. (C) The meeting with Taoiseach Bertie Ahern was primarily a photo op, but we understand the Taoiseach asked the delegation's help in finding Margaret Hassan's body and fully investigating the murder. At the DFA, the delegation met with the Anglo-Irish section to discuss lessons of the Irish peace process and with the Middle East section to review the situation in Iraq. The State Secretary hosted a lunch. According to a DFA official, the GOI was very pleased with the visit, feeling that the delegation helped give parliament a different perspective on the situation in Iraq. The GOI itself was pleased by the amount of press coverage, and by how harmoniously the delegation was. Given stories out of Iraq, they had not expected that such a diverse group of parliamentarians would have gotten on so well together and avoided one upmanship. Asked the effect of the delegation on the GOI, this official said that Ireland wants to "put all its eggs in the basket of this government to try to make it work," and to be with those in the EU who want to do all they

can to help in reconstruction. He noted, however, the ongoing quandary of how to provide reconstruction assistance in the current security environment.

Iraqi Delegation

¶7. (U) The Iraqi delegation included:

- Adnan Pachachi, former Iraqi Foreign Minister and ex-president of the former Iraqi Governing Council.
- Nawzad S. Rifat, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
- Luay Abdullah Al-Saidy, Iraqi National Accord
- Rafe H. Chiad Al-Eissawi, Sunni Iraqi Islamic Party
- Redha Jawad Taki, Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution of Iraq
- Saedi I.A. Barzinji, Kurdistan Democratic Party
- Yonadam Y. Kanna, Assyrian Democratic Movement
- Zuhair M. A. Rushid, Kurdistan Islamic Union
- Walid Al-Shahib, Islamic Dawa Party

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